

# The Irish Theosophist.

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## "THE BHAGAVAD GITA" IN PRACTICAL LIFE.

(Continued from p. 4.)

THE despondency of Arjuna has, however, another aspect, if we take Arjuna as a type of man in all ages and periods. We come at last to the same human complexion, but it varies at different times and under the action of various karmic agencies. Where one laments, another is found rejoicing, and the obstacle which crushes the one is a zest and a stimulus to his fellow. The *Gîtâ*, dealing as it does with the human unit, applies to every type, exhibits human nature in all phases of action and evolution, moved by every motive known to the human heart. In the pages of the sacred book each one may find himself, and not only his transitory self, but the wider interpretation thereof, a clue to something more divine, to a more interior nature. We expect—if the book be sacred in any true sense—to be met by a suggestion of that in ourselves of which we are dimly conscious, the radiant shape of our hopes and dreams. The *Gîtâ* should not merely exhibit man facing his destiny with despair in his eyes. Any writer of moderate eloquence can move us at this point, and we ourselves have shed luxurious tears for ourselves. The *Gîtâ* fulfils our expectations. It meets us, as it were, at the bridge of our nature and even while showing it as it now is, shows it also in transit to a diviner life. Man evolving, man in actual movement, and not man crystallized, is the subject of its song.

Over and above those numerous aspects into which we may read ourselves and the common lot of our especial type, will always be found an aspect applicable to all men, one universal, one dealing with the higher possibilities, the more interior nature, and it is in this aspect that we find the clue to our own wider field of Being. This aspect is paramount in the despondency of Arjuna. Above everything else,

when all else is said and done, all other meanings found by each and applied to his individual case, in final analysis Arjuna stands for man at the bridge, man about to pass from very human to very human-divine.

At this point there is one respect in which mankind never varies. When the human mind, weary at last of the unending material phantasmagoria, turns from the seen and the senses, from the tireless oscillations of pleasure and pain to seek something deeper, something more quiet, some peace a hint of which has flown past upon the air, there is then one step which all must take alike, one mental attitude into which all must fall. That soul which turns irrevocably to the interior paths of life does so because the pain of the world has moved it to the depths of its being. Before this point is reached the minds of men play to and fro before the small old path; they come and go; they play at becoming occultists, at entering the hidden ways of the soul. But not after this point; that, once reached, is final, because it has been reached, not by the mind, but by the soul. The inner heart has awakened, its beat is established. The soul has faced its own deeps and at the profoundest point has learned that the Whole is itself; that it feels pain or pleasure because it is bound up in the common human heritage; a man left for a lifetime to complete solitude would neither seek for joy nor flee from sorrow. Living among his fellows, life after life, he finds that his every act and thought are related to some other human being; he comes at last to cease to suffer as an animal, unheeding the pain of others, knowing nothing of the ethical bearings of pleasure and grief. We find the nobler animals, the more highly evolved, and some which have had close contact with man for several generations, showing sympathy with the pain of their own kind and even dumbly entreating the aid of man for that pain. Sympathy, in its essence, is the memory—or the experience through the imagination—of a similar suffering. When the human mind has worked through all the forms of joy and sorrow, there comes a life and a moment when the pain of the manifested world is massed before its view. Moved to an infinite compassion, forgetful of its personal lot, it goes out in a flood of tenderness and sorrow for the pain which no man can assuage or end. It is unable to endure the sight; it cries out for power to aid, for understanding of the problem, for right knowledge of right action. Then, and then only, the man resolves to become more than a man, for in that becoming lies his only means of helping. The anguish of a world in travail has torn him out of himself. His tears are given to the great sum of sorrow; his mind acknowledges its own inadequacy; the great

heart of pity wakes within him; he feels, rather than knows, that to abide in that pitiful yearning is to give some help, he knows not what, he only knows that this is Love, and Love is all too rarely given. Even while he sinks in grief and in his despondency thinks he can do no more, yet the impersonality of his lament has called the attention of the spirit; the Divine stoops to him; It communes with his awakened soul in that unspoken language which alone upholds the heart.

There is that of the higher life in the despondency of Arjuna, that he grieves but little for himself. Yet is he still unwise, still purely human, in that he grieves at all. But grief for all that lives is of another pole of force from that enfeebling, enervating emission of self-pity which renders slack (in time to paralyze) the sphere of man. Pity for another's woe tends not downward, is not inactive nor unfruitful: there is hope at the heart of it; will is the core of it; it seeks to help, it *yearns*, even while no means of helping are descried; it calls aloud to Life and Time; it has a voice that heavens must hear and answer. Such pity, tense and vibrant, hath power to summon that sacred order of Being which is the consecrated ministrant of the world. Its hierarchs hear and answer, pointing the way from helpless sorrow to an ever-increasing helpfulness and joy in service.

The man who has once reached this point enters the holy war never to draw back again. He may fail. He may hesitate. He may receive a mortal wound within the heart and life after life may find him the prisoner of that wound, weakened or stunned by it, fearing to venture into the combat or indulging in foolish strife which is not the holy war; but still, in one or another way, he gives battle. He must do so; aspiration has become a law of his nature; he cannot free himself from that upward tendency; he has entered the stream and must pass onward with its current into that wider life whose trend is to the shoreless sea.

It is in this sense, I take it, that a wise writer has said that the "abyss" lay behind Arjuna. It is that abyss which separates man, the animal, from godlike man. It would seem to be a mental abyss. The mind would appear to have undergone some alchemy, some mysterious melting and fusing and recombining which has thrown out the most personal dross. Once this has happened, the man *cannot* return to the animal, just as he cannot return to the vegetable or the mineral; the gates of a kingdom, of a realm of Nature, have closed behind him; he must onward in the eternal procession of soul. Only the soul, only that divine spark whose very essence is harmony, can thus respond to the pain of the material world, a pain which is the absence of harmony, a responsive sorrow which is compassion's self. We should not always

be the thralls of pain could we but realize that it has no real existence ; pain is only the absence of harmony.

This point of compassion is one to which all minds must come at last—*at last*. It is a far cry for some of us. In eastern writings it is typified as the loosing of the knot of the heart, and it is spoken of as a secret very difficult to know. Difficult though it be, it is yet to be done, and as everyone can hasten (or retard) his own evolution, we can bring about this point for ourselves. Each time a personal pang is felt we can ask ourselves: "To what does this suffering correspond in the wider experience of the world? Hath anyone suffered thus before me? Have any tears been shed here by another?" Soon there rises before us the unestimated, the awful sum of misery. We are appalled at its greatness. Before this flood our puny griefs go down and in their stead we come to see the world freighted with anguish, Nature herself in horrid travail, the Mind of the world giving birth to false conceptions, all stages of the universe awaiting man as saviour and deliverer; that man, son of gods, which all men may become. It is a manhood truly divine in that no one is shut out from it except by his own conscious determination. No trap is laid; all Nature lisps the secret; every age hints at it; an inner harmony incessantly repeats it; every silence is broken by the song of it and the bibles of every race cry out:

"Arise, Arjuna! Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, when once thou shalt have said, 'Thy will be done.'"

JULIA W. L. KEIGHTLEY.

(*To be continued.*)

### THE CHILDHOOD OF APOLLO.

It was long ago, so long that only the spirit of earth remembers truly. The old shepherd Tithonius sat before the door of his hut waiting for his grandson to return. He watched with drowsy eyes the eve gather and the woods and mountains grow dark over the isles—the isles of ancient Greece. It was Greece before its day of beauty, and day was never lovelier. The cloudy blossoms of smoke curling upward from the valley sparkled a while high up in the sunlit air, a vague memorial of the world of men below. From that too the colour vanished and those other lights began to shine which to some are the only lights of day. The skies drooped close upon the mountains and the silver seas, like a vast face brooding with intentness: there was enchantment, mystery and a living motion in its depths, the presence of all-pervading Zeus enfolding his starry children with the dark radiance of æther.

"Ah!" murmured the old man, looking upward, "once it was living; once it spoke to me. It speaks not now, but it speaks to others I know—to the child who looks and longs and trembles in the dewy night. Why does he linger now? He is beyond his hour. Ah, there now are his footsteps!"

A boy came up the valley driving the grey flocks which tumbled before him in the darkness. He lifted his young face for the shepherd to kiss. It was alight with ecstasy. Tithonius looked at him in wonder. A light golden and silvery rayed all about him so that his delicate ethereal beauty seemed set in a star which followed his dancing footsteps.

"How bright your eyes!" the old man said, faltering with sudden awe. "Why do your white limbs shine with moonfire light?"

"Oh, father," said the boy Apollo, "I am glad for everything is living to-night. The evening is all a voice and many voices. While the flocks were browsing night gathered about me; I saw within it and it was living everywhere; and all together, the wind with dim-blown tresses, odour, incense and secret-falling dew, mingled in one warm breath. It whispered to me and called me 'Child of the Stars,' 'Dew-Heart,' and 'Soul of Fire.' Oh, father, as I came up the valley the voices followed me with song; everything murmured love; even the daffodils nodding in the olive gloom grew golden at my feet, and a flower within my heart knew of the still sweet secret of the flowers. Listen, listen!"

There were voices in the night, voices as of star-rays descending.

*"Now the roof-tree of the midnight spreading  
Buds in citron, green and blue:  
From afar its mystic odours shedding,  
Child, on you."*

Then other sweet speakers from beneath the earth and from the distant waters and air followed in benediction, and a last voice like a murmur from universal Nature:

*"Now the buried stars beneath the mountains  
And the vales their life renew,  
Jetting rainbow blooms from tiny fountains,  
Child, for you."*

*"As within our quiet waters passing  
Sun and moon and stars we view,  
So the loveliness of life is glassing,  
Child, in you."*

*"In the diamond air the sun-star glowing  
Up its feathered radiance threw :  
All the jewel glory there was flowing,  
Child, for you.*

*"And the fire divine in all things burning  
Yearns for home and rest anew,  
From its wanderings far again returning,  
Child, to you."*

"Oh, voices, voices," cried the child, "what you say I know not, but I ray back love for love. Father, what is it they tell me? They embosom me in light and I am far away even though I hold your hand."

"The gods are about us. Heaven mingles with earth," said Tithonius trembling. "Let us go to Diotima. She has grown wise brooding for many a year where the great caves lead to the underworld. She sees the bright ones as they pass by where she sits with shut eyes, her drowsy lips murmuring as nature's self."

That night the island seemed no more earth set in sea, but a music encircled by the silence. The trees long rooted in antique slumber were throbbing with rich life; through glimmering bark and drooping leaf a light fell on the old man and boy as they passed, and vague figures nodded at them. These were the hamadryad souls of the wood. They were bathed in tender colours and shimmering lights draping them from root to leaf. A murmur came from the heart of everyone, a low enchantment breathing joy and peace. It grew and swelled until at last it seemed as if through a myriad pipes that Pan the earth-spirit was fluting his magical creative song.

They found the cave of Diotima covered by vines and tangled strailers at the end of the island where the dark green woodland rose up from the waters. Tithonius paused, for he dreaded this mystic prophetess, but a voice from within called them: "Come in, child of light; come in, old shepherd, I know why you seek me." They entered, Tithonius trembling with more fear than before. A fire was blazing in a recess of the cavern and by it sat a majestic figure robed in purple. She was bent forward, her hand supporting her face, her burning eyes turned on the intruders.

"Come hither, child," she said, taking the boy by the hands and gazing into his face. "So this frail form is to be the home of the god. The gods choose wisely. They take no warrior wild, no mighty hero to be their messenger to men, but crown this gentle head. Tell me—

you dream—have you ever seen a light from the sun falling upon you in your slumber? No, but look now; look upward." As she spoke she waved her hands over him, and the cavern with its dusky roof seemed to melt away, and beyond the heavens the heaven of heavens lay dark in pure tranquillity, a quiet which was the very hush of being. In an instant it vanished and over the zenith broke a wonderful light. "See now," cried Diotima, "the ancient Beauty! Look how its petals expand and what comes forth from its heart!" A vast and glowing breath, mutable and opalescent, spread itself between heaven and earth, and out of it slowly descending a radiant form like a god's. It drew nigh radiating lights, pure, beautiful and starlike. It stood for a moment by the child and placed its hand on his head, and then it was gone. The old shepherd fell upon his face in awe, while the boy stood breathless and entranced.

"Go now," said the sybil, "I can teach thee naught. Nature herself will adore you and sing through you her loveliest song. But, ah, the light you hail in joy you shall impart in tears. So from age to age the eternal Beauty bows itself down amid sorrows that the children of men may not forget it, that their anguish may be transformed smitten through by its fire."

Æ.

"TO DIE, TO SLEEP."

To sleep: perchance to dream, ay, there's the rub;  
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come  
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,  
Must give us pause.

It is the fashion nowadays to attribute all good things to the great ancients, and to say that whatever is done excellently by the men of to-day is only reminiscence, or mere borrowing. Well, there is truth in this; very much, perhaps, more than most people imagine.

Yet we need not say that Shakespeare had a certain passage of the Upanishads in mind when he wrote Hamlet's famous and oft misquoted soliloquy; nor again that the Sage Yajñavalkya was guilty of plagiarism by anticipation—the phrase is an excellent one—from the prince of Denmark, when we see exactly the same thought and inspiration in the way they deal with life in the abodes of Death. Before touching on the teaching of the Upanishads as to the life after death, one is tempted to advert to the fact we have hinted at, that this passage in Hamlet is as often quoted wrongly as rightly. And as too much resistance to

temptation is apt to breed spiritual pride, we shall succumb in the present instance, and slightly digress.

To begin with, that phrase "the mortal coil" is constantly misunderstood. The misconception is that the mortal coil is the earthly body, which is to be shuffled off, as a snake shuffles off its slough. But "coil" in Shakespeare means something quite different; it means almost exactly the same as turmoil or tumult; as, for instance, in *The Tempest*:

"Who was so firm, so constant, that this coil  
Would not infect his reason?"

So that the "mortal coil" is the "deadly tumult" of earthly life, and not the physical body at all.

Then again, how many people who are ready to quote, "To be, or not to be," could paraphrase correctly the line immediately after what we quoted at the outset:

"There's the respect  
That makes calamity of so long life."

Long life may be a calamity, most people will say, though without conviction, but why should it be respected? But the real meaning is, of course, that "this is the consideration that makes people submit to calamity so long"; the consideration being, of course, the dreams that may come in the sleep of death.

And this brings us at last to the thought of the Upanishads about the paradise between death and rebirth. The idea is, that there are three kinds of people; those who die with tendencies upward only, and, having thus nothing to bring them back to the earth, are not reborn again. "They pass on," says the fine imagery of the Upanishads, "by the sun-door and enter into the Eternal."

Then there are those who, on the contrary, have only earthly tendencies; nothing to lift them upwards at all, nothing to take them away for a while from this mortal coil and tumult. They are immediately born again into the world.

But to either of these classes only few belong; the just men made perfect, to the one; the professors of the physical sciences—a mystic friend of mine says—to the other. So that the whole of mankind, almost, have tendencies partly upward, partly downward. Their tendencies downward—their dreams of the dinners they have eaten and hope to eat, and other dreams, the contrary propositions to which are to be found in the Decalogue—are the tendencies that must ultimately bring them back to earth, because nowhere that one knows of, except in this comfortable world of ours, could these desires be satisfied.

There may be fires in "the other place," but we have never heard that they are used to cook dinners for the inhabitants.

But all mankind, to do humanity justice, have souls above dinners, at least in lucid intervals. Caliban was not very exalted—would indeed have worked damage to the Decalogue with relish—yet even Caliban says:

"Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments  
Will hum about mine ears, and sometimes voices  
That, if I then had waked after long sleep,  
Will make me sleep again; and then, in dreaming,  
The clouds methought would open and show riches  
Ready to drop upon me, that, when I waked  
I cried to dream again."

Thus Caliban; and Caliban, as Browning has taught us, is a theological type. And if Caliban, then why not any man? For indeed we all have divine dreams now and then, and would have more of them were it not for those professors of the physical sciences—at least so says my friend the mystic.

Well, all these divine dreams are forces, no more to be cheated of their fullest expansion than the forces dear to our friends the physical professors; and in the sleep of death they get their opportunity to work unimpeded. The finest passage in the Upanishads that deals with this thought is this:

"This Self is the inner light in the heart, consciousness, spirit, remaining ever the same, this Self enters both worlds, and is as if thinking, as if moving. When the man falls asleep, the Self transcends this world, transcends the things of death. For when the man is born and enters the body, he is enwrapped and involved in evil things. But ascending again when he dies, he puts off evil things"—puts off, in fact, the tendencies we have spoken of as the contraries of the Decalogue.

"For of the man, of the spirit, there are two abodes—this world and the other world; and the world that unites the two is the dream-world.

"And when he is in the world that unites the other two, he beholds them both, this world and the other world; and according to what he has attained in the other world, coming to that attainment he beholds things evil or things blissful.

"And when he falls asleep, taking his materials from this all-containing world, cutting the wood himself, and building himself, as it were, by his own shining, by his own light—when he thus falls asleep, he is his own light.

“There are no chariots nor horses nor roads there, so he himself puts forth chariots and horses and roads; there are no joys, rejoicings or enjoyments there, so he himself puts forth joys, rejoicings, enjoyments; there are no springs or streams or ponds there, so he puts forth of himself springs and streams and ponds, for he is the maker, the creator.”

Here, as in many other passages of the Upanishads, we are given an analogy which is the golden key to the paradise of those who have gone forth from life; the only key that we can have while we are shut in by our present limitations of knowledge.

The key is this: life after death, for those who are to be born again, is a bright and radiant dream; a fairy palace, of which each one is the builder, as in dreams; he takes the material from this all-containing world, and having cut the wood himself, is himself the builder, working by the light, by the shining of the immortal Self.

And just as in dream, “the seen, as seen he beholds again; what was heard he hears again; and what was enjoyed by the other powers, he enjoys again by the other powers; the seen and the unseen, heard and unheard, enjoyed and unenjoyed, real and unreal, he sees it all; as all he sees it.” The magician, in paradise as in dreams, is the creative or formative imagination; the magician’s materials are drawn from the experiences of this all-containing world. According to the measure of a man’s aspirations is the scenery of his paradise; according to his spiritual unfolding will he be surrounded by sensuous delights, or, rising above them, will he enter into unveiled vision of the Eternal. In the words of the Upanishad: According to his spiritual culture, according to his gain, to what he has attained in the spiritual world, he beholds things blissful or evil, that is, sensuous and earthly.

All his spiritual aspirations, all the divine moments of life where he has risen above the material longings of the material world to something higher, holier, more real; every act of gentle charity, of high heroism, of self-forgetfulness—this is his “attainment in the other world,” his spiritual earnings, his “treasure in heaven.” These fair aspirations and intuitions are forces—the most potent forces in life; they are quite strictly ruled by the law that conserves all forces, and quite strictly work themselves out in fullest fruition in paradise.

We see precisely the same law ruling the world of dream; as a man’s imaginings, so are his dreams; for the sensual, sensual; for the pure, pure. And those whose aspirations are fixed, in waking, on the shining Eternal, do really, through dream, enter into the life of the Eternal, and come back to waking life radiant with a light that never was on land or sea.

After sleep comes awaking. The shining intuitions and aspirations have reached their fullest fruition. "Therefore he whose radiance has become quiescent, is reborn through the impulses indwelling in mind."

Or, to convey the same truth in the richer, fuller, and more poetical language of another Upanishad, the passage from death to rebirth is this; when the man's soul goes forth from life, "what he has known and what he has done, and the insight he has already gained, take him by the hand;

"Then, just as a caterpillar, going to the end of a blade of grass, lays hold on another and lifts himself over to it; so this Self, after laying aside the body and putting off the things of this world of unwisdom, lays hold of his other attainment and lifts himself over to it.

"And just as a goldsmith, taking the gold of one fair work, makes of it another new and fairer form; so this Self, after laying aside the body and putting off the things of this world of unwisdom, makes for himself another new and fairer form, like the form of the Fathers or the celestial nymphs or the gods or the Lord of beings or the great Evolver, or the form of other beings.

"For this Self is the Eternal; it has as its forms consciousness, emotion, vital breath, the powers of seeing and hearing, the potencies of earth, the waters, breath, the shining ether, light; of desire and freedom from desire, of wrath and freedom from wrath, of the law and freedom from the law; it takes on every form. And as its form is here below, so is its form in the other world.

"According as a man has worked and walked, so he becomes; he who has worked highly becomes high, he who has worked evil becomes evil; through holy works he becomes holy; through evil, evil.

"For they say indeed 'the Spirit is formed of desire; and according to his desire, so is his will; and according to his will, so are his works; and whatever works he works, to that he goes.' As the verse says: 'He, tied through his work, goes to whatever form his mind is set on.'

"And after gaining the reward of his work, whatever he does here, he returns again from the other world to this world of work."

Here, then, in the words of the Upanishads themselves, and, for the most part, from the same Upanishad that contains the story of the kingly Rajput sage, Prayâhana son of Jîbala, we have the answer to all his questions, at least so far as they refer to the way of rebirth and the paradise after death that man enters to dream awhile, before he is born again.

Born again—to reality? Say, rather, from one dream to another.  
 “Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting”; or, to quote again the  
 greatest poet of them all:

“We are such stuff  
 As dreams are made on, and our little life  
 Is rounded with a sleep.”

C. J.

#### A DAWN SONG.

WHILE the earth is dark and grey  
 How I laugh within : I know  
 In my breast what ardours gay  
 From the morning overflow.

Though the cheek be white and wet  
 In my heart no fear may fall :  
 There my chieftain leads, and yet  
 Ancient battle-trumpets call.

Bend on me no hasty frown  
 If my spirit slight your cares :  
 Sunlike still my joy looks down  
 Changing tears to beamy airs.

Think me not of fickle heart  
 If with joy my bosom swells  
 Though your ways from mine depart :  
 In the true are no farewells.

What I love in you I find  
 Everywhere, A friend I greet  
 In each flower and tree and wind—  
 Oh, but life is sweet, is sweet.

What to you are bolts and bars  
 Are to me the hands that guide  
 To the freedom of the stars  
 Where my golden kinsmen bide.

From my mountain-top I view :  
 Twilight's purple flower is gone,  
 And I send my song to you  
 On the level light of dawn.

Æ.

“THE VIRTUES THAT DO MOST EASILY BESET US.”

(Concluded from p. 16.)

YET another hindering virtue, the virtue of energy. How many “rush out, to do, to do,” fearful lest the wave of force in which they have been participating should pass over them, leaving no results to mark its action in their hearts. They find the world much as it was before this great baptism of spiritual energy took place. No new work has sprung up as a test for their fidelity or their enthusiasm—nothing save, perhaps, some small duties too unpleasant or too trivial to be reckoned as part of the “work of the theosophical movement.” And then they sit them down and despair, because of their manifest unfitness to be entrusted with tasks for the good of mankind. One thought for such virtue-laden souls, some of whom may be the very back-bone of the cause. Who is really working, they or the force behind things? And which part of them works best and most effectually—the outer personality, or the inner man, who is ever in touch with the real, divine worker?

Here again comes in the message of the new cycle. Tune your hearts to harmony, and all the work will be done that is required of you. We are not asked to labour beyond “the level of the day’s most quiet need.” If no outward task falls to our hands at once we may work, perhaps, quite as efficaciously by offering to the true worker within us the *will* to work. By so doing we strengthen his hands. That is all we can do, at the best; for the impelling force of the most successful is from him, and no other. No worker commits a greater mistake than by supposing that his personality originates or accomplishes anything.

Yet another thing that is sometimes lost sight of by the over-ardent. Theosophical work does not confine itself to propagating Theosophy. It includes the whole duty and activity of man, in whatever department of life his karma places him. None of us (save in a phenomenally hot summer) are ever for a moment inactive. Whither are all these activities tending? Most of them come in the course of a day’s events, are so much flotsam flung by the aimless waves of daily happenings on the shore of our petty lives. Since they form a part of the order of things they may, assuredly, have a place in a Theosophist’s theosophical work. If Krishna said to a desponding disciple, “Bring me thy failures,” we may well add also, “Bring me thy trifles.”

I close with the enumeration of yet another virtue which does, indeed, most easily beset us, the virtue of idealism. We are all very idealistic people, very idealistic indeed. And the rest of the world is not so at all, which is often trying to the limited patience of a human nature that is so made that it cannot see two sides of a subject at once without squinting. We want to obey the only condition of the new cycle, and get into harmony with a world with which we are often distinctly out of harmony, partly from its unpardonable failure to understand or appreciate us.

This is really an important matter, for the great absence of brotherhood among us in the past has been, to no small measure, due to our terrible excess of ideality. Nothing short of perfection in our brothers, and perfection according to our own connotation of the term, would suffice for the exercise on our part of even ordinary tolerance. It is time we came down from such high altitudes.

Harmony, as I understand the word, is a perfect comprehension of every individual soul. It is something more than a feeling *with*—rather it is feeling plus an intelligent knowledge. Only a Master is perfectly harmonious; but all who view that high condition from afar have to aim at becoming so. It is a good practice to stop questions about the actual state of development of this person and that, and just mentally to place oneself in their outer coverings, and feel what it is like to be them. Then one ceases to wonder or to declaim at anything one finds in them; one understands, because one has *been* them for the moment.

At the present stage, average humanity has a much greater need to be felt with and understood than to be “done good to.” Is it not so also with Theosophists, who would, I suppose, feel a little twinge of injured pride if they were classed in exactly the same category as those among whom they wish to work? We all know how we warm towards those persons who are kind enough to be interested in our outer lives, as well as our inner; how much more, then, is such sympathy appreciated by those whose outer life is, at present, the only part of themselves that is consciously active? We will, then, take people as we find them, rather than as, according to our exalted idealism, they ought to be. I am beginning to doubt if there is really an “ought” in any department of Nature that is not daily being fulfilled. Supposing, one high day, we were all to discover by opened eyes, that the whole world has only been, through all its dark, distressful phases, what it ought to have been at each successive moment? I do not say it is so, but, supposing——?

Harmony, then, is the keynote of the new cycle, the only principle

by which human action is henceforth to be guided and bound. Brotherhood, and the work that is an outcome of brotherhood; not on one plane only, and in one direction, but on all planes that make up the universe, and in every department that manifests itself as an integral part of the world, this is the *rationale* of the Theosophical Society, and the *rationale*, also, of every movement that has for its object the development of the race.

CHARLOTTE E. WOODS.

### THE POWER OF THOUGHT.

FROM the silent and far-distant past there come to us great philosophies, great religions, showing that in the ancient times questions relating to man and the universe occupied the minds of the people then as much, if not more, than they do at the present day. Judging from what we read of their schools of initiation, they possessed a deep knowledge of the mysteries of life; knowledge which they imparted to those who were willing and ready to receive it. Why we are so ignorant when we have, and always have had, great teachings, is a very natural question to arise in the mind. It would seem as if there is still something undeveloped in our own natures; something which would enable us to take advantage of the teachings placed within our reach.

This something is thought, into which the life and nature of the teaching can incarnate. Many true things may be said, great teachings may be very near us, but our incapability of understanding make them to us either untrue or non-existent.

In studying thought through self-analysis one is forced, I think, to recognize that the energy which gives life to our thought comes from that in us which discriminates. One of the attributes of the discriminating faculty is that it can synthesize years of experience into one synthetic impression. These synthetic impressions are the bestowers of intelligence to each thought. Each thought then becomes the vehicle of the power and reality of itself.

Any civilization shows the collective intelligence of its units. The more each unit knows the greater and grander will be that building. That the present civilization has not reached idealistic heights is shown by the appeal that is made to some unknown, invisible power to lead us to a better state of existence.

If the present civilization is the product of certain thoughts, we see the result of a law in its visible effects. The results and effects are so tangible that we cannot very well ignore them, but of course we may

refuse to trace them to their origin and cause. But the fact remains that our thoughts have had the power to produce such results. They did not come about in some mysterious miraculous way. They are the plain, practical, and inevitable effects following the individualized thoughts and desires arising in the human mind. And it would seem but common-sense to think that any change must come about in a practical, common-sense way, that of thinking thoughts of the same nature as the civilization we wish to live in.

In thought we all come to a place of blankness, and from that point we trust. Our minds seem to be like circles which vary much in circumference. Some people will face this blankness at a shorter distance from the centre than others. And so we have the ordinary mortal, great thinkers and philosophers, and beings who in theosophical literature are called masters, the initiates who at stated periods give out the religions of the world. Either masters, the great initiates in every age, are wiser than we are, or they are not. That is a decision arrived at by each unit. Each unit who decides that they are wiser will trust more or less to their statements about life and nature, which is beyond their own present understanding. This trust is not blind faith or reliance on the knowledge acquired by others. In their teaching we are clearly and plainly shown that anything we gain must come through our own efforts, that we only receive what we are able to take. This trust becomes knowledge, because the mind is trusting in a teaching which makes it realize that knowledge can only become known to it through its own exertions.

When people begin to decide, discriminate, and think for themselves, their thoughts have more power, because they put the positive force from themselves directly into their thoughts. It has the effect of intensifying the whole nature, faults as well as virtues. This is the reason why the noblest and purest ethics are so much dwelt upon by all who know something of nature's laws. In the minds of those who do not act positively thoughts seem to smoulder, and by the time they reach action their force and power has somewhat diminished. In those who think decidedly, who use thought, the consciousness or intelligence acts from the reality and comprehension of the thought and remains there. Each thought will then act swiftly, with full force and power of itself, and no energy is wasted by the slow smouldering which takes place in most people's minds.

But thought, whether active or passive, has effect on the thinker during earth-life, because thought seems to be the reflected idea of the reality which produces it, and therefore cannot be separated from it.

From another aspect, thought is the power through which life becomes manifested. We can see an instance of this by observing how thought is the means of producing a definite result in our own nature. No matter how great the feelings we may have surging within us, the body will not obey those until a thought has been formulated in the mind. It may be very shadowy, but if there the feelings will ultimately manifest themselves in action.

From one aspect, the Theosophical Society has done much to widen and soften people's minds. No one, it seems to me, can fail to recognize the importance and power of the forces, which would become active, as the minds of the people realized what the effect of the action of these forces would have on life and civilization.

The first object is to form the nucleus of a universal brotherhood of humanity, without distinction of race, sex, class, colour or creed ; 2nd, To promote the study of Aryan and other eastern literatures, religions and sciences, and to demonstrate the importance of that study ; 3rd, To investigate the unexplained laws of nature and the psychical powers latent in man.

The importance and effect of the first object is so evident that it is unnecessary to say anything about it. The second meets with greater opposition, especially from those who believe that the only true light shines exclusively through their own religion. From the study of different teachings thoughts are formed, which make possible wider conceptions of man and nature. These break the chains of creed and dogma. The thinker can then become one with a ray from the soul. That ray is freedom.

This brings the mind to the attitude of standing alone, where it realizes that the only light that can illuminate the darkness depends on the activity of powers within itself, and the study of those powers which is the third object of the Society.

The importance of these objects of course, like everything else, depends on the value we attach to them. But if we perceive and realize life through the intelligence we have, and since we would not believe anyone if they said, "so much can you attain and no more," it then becomes advisable to awaken as much of our nature as we can, and to study it, so as to be able to use it. Study of this kind is also important from another standpoint, that of freeing the mind from effects. A fleeting, emotional thought has the power to bring tears to the eyes, or if of the opposite nature will produce laughter and merriment. If thought has the power to affect our bodies in this way, it is reasonable to suppose that in the world or plane of causes any change

must be much greater, seeing that it has the power to produce such perceptible effects.

It would seem, then, as if the world or plane of thought is the most powerful and also the most real. Tracing intently the way in thought gradually produces effects, and leads the mind to dwell more on the cause or the reality. This makes possible the idea of seeing the reasonableness of how intelligent beings can exist apart from the visible universe and without a physical body. Space has not greater depths than our own natures, nor stars of greater brightness than the flashes which illuminate the mind as it looks inward to itself.

A. P. D.

### NEEDS OF THE TIMES.

You think we need better politics, do you? Politics are all right if we could find statesmen who loved their country better than themselves. You think we need silver or gold perhaps? We have plenty of both if we knew how to use it for all. Better clothes, more food and better? If you think this it is because you have not studied very deeply into the matter, but have been looking only at the surface of things. We would have plenty of clothes and food to clothe and feed the world if those who have these things would learn how to share them with their fellows, this you know as well as I. Plenty of everything we needed in the ordinary sense if the real needs of humanity, which are none of these, could be supplied.

You had better look at these real needs if you are trying to help humanity, for you need to learn these yourself, and what you need is the need of humanity.

You had better begin on yourself in two ways. First be sincere, and second, have more human sympathy.

Don't cover yourself up in that well-clothed body of yours and act outside what you do not feel. That word "truth" does not mean that you are to give away a lot of truth to people who perhaps don't want it; but it means be the truth yourself, and then of course you'll give it.

Don't say one thing and act another; don't act one thing and mean another.

You know as well as others that humanity as a whole and as a unit has a great heart-ache, a great need that has not been satisfied, a need that men alone can give to men.

This doesn't mean charity as we use the term. It doesn't mean you are to give or throw at people a lot of advice they do not want. It does not mean to fill them up with a lot of food, or clothe them with

clothes you do not want. It doesn't mean that you are to go to them and tell them how sorry you are for them in words which they generally put down as a lie. You know this as well as I if you'll think about it. But it means a genuine sympathy in the interests of others as much as you take in your own. A sympathy in their highest hopes, an understanding between them and you that they are nobler and better than they appear; that they have tender sympathies hidden away that you recognize and like. These tender things are hidden because they fear to show their best, fearing no one can understand them, but if called out by more human sympathy would lift many of the heart-aches from the human heart, would give more sweetness to the world than we know, and bring out higher possibilities than you dream of. Your sympathy, *if it is sincere*, will bring out this tender side of the hungry human heart of humanity, and so you will fill its need. We hunger together for human sympathy, and are each afraid to give it or to show we want it, and so men are born and die, and still the cry goes up again and again of the needs of humanity.

So I say first of all be sincere, then by the power of this sympathy great men, great women will arise who will be "warriors for truth," aroused by this power of sincere human sympathy.

The needs will not be so many, you will find, for men who are now only men will live as gods, because they will have found the needs of the times, and supplying these real needs they will find that their own are satisfied.

A. M. S.

#### ACTIVITIES.

MRS. TINGLEY writes from Athens:

"We are up to our eyes in work. You can have no conception of how the Athenians have responded to our efforts. A large public meeting crowded. Hundreds turned away, and those attending were of the most intellectual and cultured class.

"The American Vice-Consul presided. He is a power in Greece, and on intimate terms with the king and queen. The people here adore him. He was the one who introduced the Olympian Games here last year and invited the Americans here.

"Last night formed a T. S. in Greece. One hundred members! A hall has been offered us by the citizens of Greece and we give another meeting Saturday night.

"While Greek is the language English is spoken by many. Secretary appointed last night is a Greek but was a graduate at Oxford, and has been looking into Theosophy. Most devoted and energetic.

"The press are with us. A glowing account of our meeting in all papers. People flocking here all day for interviews, and some say an old orator has returned to Athens in shape of this old lady. I smile. Let them think it if it helps work.

"We have given a Brotherhood Supper to the Armenian refugees from Constantinople in shape of blankets and clothing."

Bro. Crooke made another of his successful tours through South Wales. At Cheltenham, Cardiff, and Shepton Mallet new Branches were formed. The public meetings at Cardiff and Weston-super-Mare were particularly successful. A new Centre was formed at Bath, also at Weston-super-Mare. The Bristol Branch is practically the heart of the movement in these parts. At most of the meetings instrumental music was an important feature. Our "Home" Crusader will soon have a purple banner too, and then who will stay his work? Unselfish quiet work, on the part of isolated members here and there, is responsible for much of the success attending Bro. Crooke's visit. They have lit the sparks which readily fan into flame when the right time comes, as it is sure to do.

Owing to the exertions of Bro. Edge a new Branch has been formed at Portsmouth, and is in a flourishing condition.

Dr. Bogren has been busy lecturing to 200 and 300 people in Helsingborg on Theosophy, and had most interested audiences. "You could hear a pin drop," as the saying is. Papers reported sympathetically, and he is preparing for further work of the same kind in the near future.

#### THE T. S. IN EUROPE (IRELAND).

3, UPPER ELY PLACE, DUBLIN.

THE idea of public meetings elsewhere than at headquarters continues in force, and another meeting was held in the Central Hall on 28th ult.

We hope to have interesting discussions on the 18th and 25th, led by two of our active lady members, Mrs. Dick and Mrs. Duncan, on *Brotherhood* and *The Building of the Temple*.

FRED. J. DICK, *Convener*.

#### NOTICE.

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